

The United States must lead if there is any hope of restoring stability to the region. The President's silence is unacceptable. In the midst of this crisis, his silence is intolerable. He is AWOL.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.J. RES. 88, MARRIAGE PROTECTION AMENDMENT

Mr. GINGREY, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 109-573) on the resolution (H. Res. 918) providing for consideration of the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 88) proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States relating to marriage, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

PROTECTING FLORIDA'S MANATEE POPULATION

(Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the bill H.R. 4075, the Marine Mammals Protection Act, legislation that protects a true wonder of nature, the Florida manatee.

Living in Florida's streams, swamps, and rivers, manatees are beloved throughout my district and especially in Citrus County.

The Marine Mammals Protection Act provides new and increased protections for the manatees from fishermen and from wildlife loss.

Chairman RICHARD POMBO deserves credit for bringing this bill up for a vote and helping to protect one of Florida's most precious natural resources.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation will provide grants and protections to help ensure that Florida's sea cows will be around for my grandchildren, my great grandchildren, and everyone to enjoy years into the future.

There actually is a preserve in my area where the manatees, once they are injured, can go for treatment, and it is a wonderful, wonderful resource. Thankfully, the manatee has come back from being endangered.

THE U.S. RESPONSE TO THE CRISIS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, when you are home in your district, there are those who are looking at the crisis in the Middle East and asking what is the response of the United States. And, yes, of course Israel has the right to defend. But the President of the United States, the Executive, has the right as well to stand and call boldly for a cease fire.

We are the superpower of the world. We do have Americans in harm's way. I myself have students in the Mickey Leland internship program who are making their way back home from Israel.

What I would say is that this is a time for engagement. This is a time for drawing parties from the Arab states as well as Israel and others who would go into the Mideast, sit down in Jordan or other states that are surrounding the area, and actually have a confrontation, a meeting, an understanding, if you will, to bring some solution.

It is important for us to be in the way of saving lives. It is important for us to acknowledge the necessity of finding balance so that we can save lives.

Soldiers should be returned, but we should not ignore the opportunity for engagement. We must be in the Mideast. We must draw the parties together. We must find a solution. We must save lives.

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SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BOUSTANY). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

BLAZING GUNS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, news from the second front: The border war continues. It sounds like a scene from Lonesome Dove or some other western movie. Hundreds of shots were ringing out over the Rio Grande River, piercing the night for a period of minutes. But movie villains, this was not. These are real outlaws that are shrouded in darkness and shooting at Americans, just like in the old days.

The gunfire belongs to the border, the U.S.-Mexican border. Just last week, in the moonlight, was a scene of machine gun madness. It could have been a fatal barrage of bullets.

Last Wednesday night, Border Patrol and Hidalgo County, Texas, sheriff's deputies patrolling the Rio Grande River, the international border between Mexico and the United States, stumbled upon two boys from Mexico that were running from outlaws on the Mexican side. They had just raided their ranch and kidnapped their father and killed a ranch hand, so they were fleeing these criminals.

They were swimming to the safety of the United States. They were hiding in the cornfields of Mexico for several hours while machine gun carrying killers were looking for them.

But violence did not end on the Mexican side of the river where it started.

The victims swam across the river to their escape into the hands of U.S. law enforcement officers. Seconds after stumbling on the boys, law enforcement officers on the border and sheriff's deputies were engulfed in a barrage of bullets.

The bad guys on the Mexican side of the border, these thugs who were lying in wait, would wait no more, and they decided to fire on American peace officers from their side of the river. As many as 10 men with machine guns turned their guns to fire 200 to 300 rounds of ammunition at law enforcement officers on the American side of the river.

Luckily, the Americans had built a levee on the American side, just like a fortress, and they were protected from these kidnappers who would shoot their automatic weapons as if they were on the Israeli-Lebanon border. Their bullets ricocheted off this dirt wall. The deputies dove behind it, but they never returned fire to the Mexican side.

This gang-style rural warfare you hear about on battlefields is in our own American backyard. In just the last year and a half, this is the fifth time Border Patrol has been shot at.

Former Texas Ranger Doyle Holdridge put it best. He said, "After dark on the Texas-Mexican border, it gets western."

You won't even normally find Hidalgo County deputies in that area of the border. Their sheriff doesn't allow them to go there. He said it is too dangerous to patrol that portion of the river. Instead, the sheriff only reacts to calls for help, spending the rest of the time trying to make their presence known in neighborhoods that are in fear living on the border.

Sheriff Lupe Trevino says the Federal Government has left the gate wide open, allowing thugs, plain criminals, to do damage on the American side of the border. He says drastic cuts have washed away homeland security funding and drained funds from community policing from this border area in South Texas.

Sheriff Trevino says a lack of enforcement, lack of funding and lack of Federal support has left local authorities to stand by, while guerillas fire machine guns at them, invaders take over their neighborhoods and leave local law enforcement in harm's way while on border patrol.

Mr. Speaker, this shootout of 200 to 300 rounds barely made the news last week. We hear all about the border shootings on the Israeli-Lebanon border, but, Mr. Speaker, our government should be as concerned about the gunfire on our border as we are about blazing guns in the Middle East.

And that's just the way it is.

IN SUPPORT OF ISRAEL'S RIGHT TO SELF-DEFENSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my support, my strong support, for the Nation of Israel as it exercises its right to self-defense in the face of terrorist attacks.

I am sure my colleagues are aware that back on June 25th, members of the Hamas terrorist organization attacked an Israeli military post outside the Gaza Strip. Two Israeli soldiers were killed and another was captured. Israel responded to this clear act of war with appropriate force, seeking the return of its soldier and an end to rocket attacks coming from the Gaza Strip. The violence continued, though, with Gaza-based terrorists firing a rocket into a high school in the city of Ashkelon.

Many of Hamas' top leaders have advocated the kidnapping of Israeli soldiers, including the Palestinian Foreign Minister, who said in March that Hamas should kidnap Israeli soldiers and exchange them for jailed Palestinian terrorists.

Of course, attacks on Israel from the Gaza Strip were just the beginning. Last week, Hezbollah terrorists attacked Israeli soldiers in northern Israel, killing eight and kidnapping two. They also began firing rockets on northern Israeli towns, including Haifa, the third-largest city in the country.

Israel again responded to this act of war by seeking to defend themselves. They entered Lebanon in an attempt both to rescue the kidnapped soldiers and prevent Hezbollah terrorists from committing further acts against Israel. They also blockaded the country to prevent Iran and Syria from sending further supplies, arms, and terrorists into Lebanon to support Hezbollah's actions.

This weekend, however, with increasing attacks from Hezbollah, Israel officials are now warning civilians as far south as Tel Aviv to be on alert for rocket attacks. There is also word that Iranian Revolutionary Guard soldiers are in southern Lebanon, helping to train Hezbollah and equip them with new, longer-range missiles and rockets, so they can threaten more Israeli citizens.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, world leaders have not solidly backed Israel's right to self-defense. While the Bush administration expressed support for Israel's actions, support for our ally in the Middle East has not come from all corners. In fact, last week the European Union criticized Israel's response as "disproportionate." I would like to know what the EU would think if one of their member nations were attacked by terrorists and the U.S. referred to their response as "disproportionate."

The EU has also condemned Israel for its air and sea blockade of Lebanon. That blockade is necessary, however, because we know that otherwise Iran and Syria would continue to funnel more and more weapons and personnel into southern Lebanon.

Mr. Speaker, on Friday I wrote to the current EU president to express my

strong disapproval of the European Union's comments. I will include for the RECORD that letter.

The fact is, Mr. Speaker, that Israel has complied with international agreements, such as U.N. Security Council Resolution 425, by withdrawing from Lebanon. Unfortunately, the Lebanese Government has not held up its end of the bargain, failing to control southern Lebanon, rein in Hezbollah and support peace and security on their southern border, as required by Security Council Resolution 1559 from September 2004.

Hamas, meanwhile, called Hezbollah's actions "a heroic operation." Despite what many international observers thought might happen, Hamas is not acting like a responsible government. Instead, they are sticking to their roots as a terrorist organization, encouraging the sort of attacks that flared up in the recent violence.

Mr. Speaker, the international community needs to stand behind the State of Israel and support it as they defend themselves against terrorist attacks. I understand that tomorrow we are going to consider a resolution on the House floor that would express support for Israel and condemn the attacks by Hamas and Hezbollah, and I urge my colleagues in the strongest possible terms to vote for this resolution.

For the sake of the Israeli people and all residents of the region, I hope the current violence ends soon. But we must recognize Israel's right to defend itself and do what it must to end terrorist attacks against their soldiers and their people.

Mr. Speaker, I include for the RECORD the letter referred to earlier.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, July 14, 2006.

Prime Minister MATTI VANHANEN,
President in Office, Council of the European Union, 1000 Brussels, Belgium.

DEAR PRIME MINISTER VANHANEN: I am writing to express my strong disapproval of comments made by the European Union (EU) and individual member nations in reaction to Israel's response to terrorist attacks against them.

As you know, on June 25 members of the Hamas terrorist group attacked an Israeli military post in southern Israel, killing two Israeli soldiers and kidnapping another, Cpl. Galid Shalit. In response, Israel took actions to try to rescue Shalit, end attacks against its citizens, and hold the Palestinian Authority responsible. It is well-known that top Hamas leaders, including Ahmed Jaabari and Jamal Abu Samhadna, helped plan the attack on the Israeli post.

Later, on July 12, members of the Lebanese-based Hezbollah terrorist group attacked northern Israel, killing eight soldiers and kidnapping two others. These actions came despite the fact that UN Security Council Resolution 425 requires Lebanon to reestablish its authority in the southern portion of the country and to work towards international peace and security along its border with Israel. In response, Israel has imposed an air and sea blockade on Lebanon and sought to reduce Hezbollah's ability to attack Haifa and other Israeli population centers.

Despite the fact that Israel has exercised past restraint and is now acting in clear self-

defense to protect its people, the EU issued a statement criticizing Israel for a "disproportionate use of force"—comments echoed by French President Jacques Chirac and Spanish Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero. The EU also said that "the imposition of an air and sea blockade on Lebanon cannot be justified."

I find those comments to be misguided and unfair to Israel. In order to defend itself and its citizens from attacks on two sides, Israel has responded with the intent of ending the terrorist organizations' capacity to carry out further violence. The blockade is necessary to prevent further arms, military supplies, and terrorists from entering Lebanon and being used against Israel. It is widely known that Hezbollah has long been funded and aided by both Syria and Iran, and that assistance would continue during the violence if Israel were not to impose the blockade.

The United States has stood behind Israel and supported them as a democratic ally in a troubled region. It is disappointing to see that the EU does not seem to understand the need for Israel to defend itself against terrorist attacks.

I strongly urge you to reconsider your comments and instead issue a statement in support of Israel's right to defend itself.

Sincerely,

FRANK PALLONE, JR.
Member of Congress.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. JONES of North Carolina addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

RAISING AWARENESS OF AND FUNDING FOR RADIO AL MAHABA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mrs. MCCARTHY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow the House will take up H. Res. 784, a resolution I introduced that honors Radio Al Mahaba, an Iraqi radio station that offers the Middle East's only programming for women. The station began broadcasting on April 1, 2005, as an educational tool for the women of Iraq.

Historically, Iraqi women were extremely well educated, but the educational oppression brought on by Saddam Hussein led to the illiteracy rate for women rising to 75 percent. Saddam's regime drove women back to confinement and the extremists restricted them with harsh rules and practices, mostly imported from Iran and Saudi Arabia.

After Saddam was ousted, the women of Iraq needed some way to reach out to all women nationwide, to talk to them directly and provide help.

Bushra Jamil, an Iraqi who was living in Canada, saw this as an opportunity to empower the women of Iraq as it transitioned to a democracy. Bushra returned home and created Radio Al Mahaba.

Once the station began broadcasting, the response from Iraqi women was astonishing. Radio Al Mahaba programs